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## HOW TO LOCATE INDIAN PLACES ON MODERN MAPS<sup>1</sup>

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In the collections of the Ohio State Museum, a manuscript recently came to light, which had never before been given attention. It turned out to be the private travel diary of the Rev. Johannes Roth, a Moravian missionary among the Indians in the American East. In this diary, Roth describes his journey, in the summer of 1772, by water, with Indian converts in canoes, from the Moravian Indian mission of Friedenshütten, near Wyalusing, on the North Branch of the Susquehanna, to Great Island, below present-day Lock Haven, on the West Branch. From here, the migration was continued overland, on foot and horseback, to the Allegheny River and, eventually, to their final destination, Friedensstadt (or Langundouténünk), a Moravian mission on the upper course of the Great Beaver, in Lawrence County, Pennsylvania.

Since not even the Moravian Archives at Bethlehem, Penna., possess a copy of this manuscript, its contents had been entirely unknown.

In this account of his day-by-day progress, the Rev. Roth mentions a number of Delaware (or Lenni Lenape) Indian names for Pennsylvania localities which, guided by their etymology, I have attempted to locate on the map. I am exclusively presenting here such Indian names as have never before been discussed, or even listed, for the state of Pennsylvania.

I am introducing each of the following place names in the spelling found in Roth's diary which, by the way, is in his own hand. He had profound knowledge of Unami, the leading Lenape dialect; hence, the names, as he heard them pronounced by his Indians, no doubt, conveyed to him a distinct meaning, which in every case is descriptive. Since, however, he jotted them down on the basis of his native German phonology, using, moreover, in some cases, his own individualized spelling (as he likewise does in his German), most of the names must first be rewritten in a form which permits their etymological analysis. The etymologies here following are derived from Brinton (1888), or Zeisberger's Dictionary (MS), or both.

### DISCUSSION OF ROTH'S LENAPE PLACE NAMES

According to the diarist, his first night camp was only about eight miles downstream from Wyalusing in a location called, by his Lenape, *que nahlach quamique*. Only when writing *quen-nallah-kamike* can one attempt an etymological analysis: *quen-*, 'far, long'; *nallah[ih]*, 'up the stream'; *kamike*, indicating quality of soil, here, 'good soil.' This gives a meaning of 'good bottom land far upstream.' A location fitting this description appears, about eight miles below Wyalusing, on *U. S. Geol. Surv. Map*, Penna., Laceyville Quadrangle, under the name of 'North Flat,' across the river from Skinner's Eddy (fig. 1). 'North Flat' clearly expresses in English what the Indians meant to say in Lenape.

<sup>1</sup>Paper read before The Ohio Academy of Science, Section of Anthropology and Sociology, at its annual meeting at Kent State University, Kent, Ohio, on April 18th, 1952.

For the following night's camp site, about twenty-five miles below North Flat, the Lenape had the name of *Mehamakapuchküng*. When rewritten, *Mecha-máchk-apuchk-üink*, the following etymology presents itself: *mecha*-, 'great, big'; *machk[e]*, 'red'; *-apuchk-*, 'rock, cliff'; *-üink*, locative suffix, 'place where.' Meaning of the name: 'place of the big red cliff(s).' The Pennsylvania Guide (1940), page 362, mentions the "red cliffs that plunge into the stream," near that point, on the south bank of the North Branch, 25 miles below North Flat. The diary, moreover, refers to three islands, nearby in the river; they are shown on

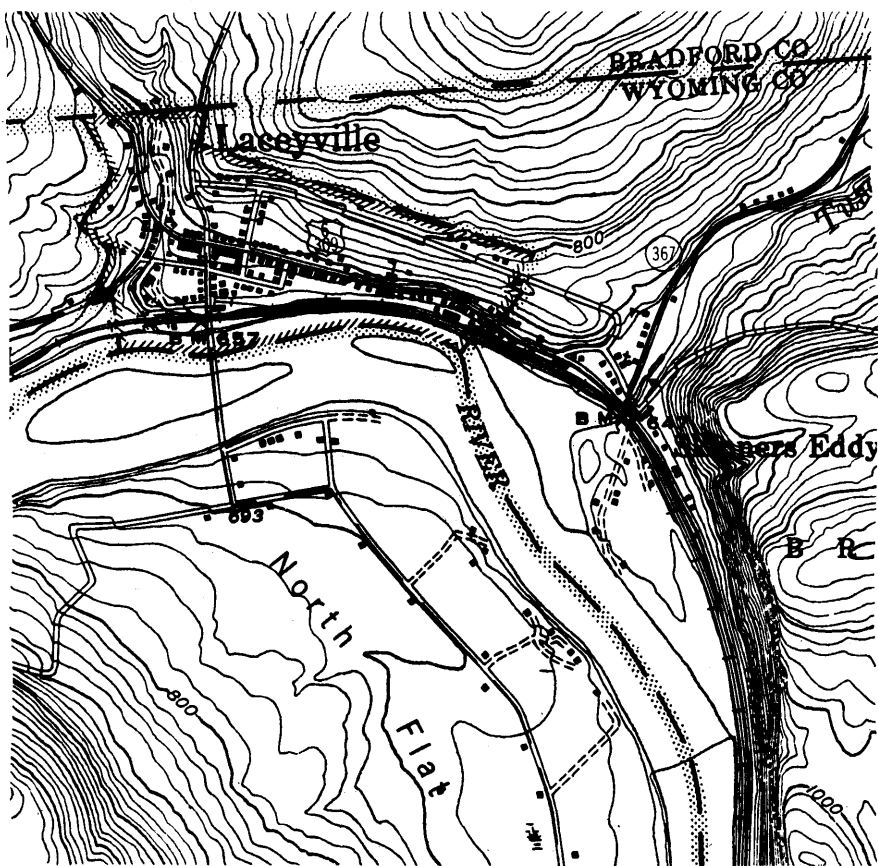


FIGURE 1. Map section showing North Flat, across the Susquehanna's North Branch from Skinner's Eddy.

*U. S. Geol. Surv. Map*, Pennsylvania, Tunkhannock Quadrangle, where also the precipitous character of the south bank is clearly evident (fig. 2). According to White (1883), page 121 ff., these red cliffs are outcroppings of "red shale," which in this region is overlaid with a top stratum of "calcareous breccia."

Roth states that they made their next night camp below a place which he calls *Ehomatank*, adding, "that is, a fall." In fact, he applies this same name to a second cataract, not too far below the first, spelling, this time, *Ehomatank*. Not as far as I can see does either of the two forms mean 'a fall.' Hence I propose, although with some caution, to write, *Eh-ámæ<sup>n</sup>-tank*, which is conducive to the

following etymology: *eh-*, emphatic prefix, 'indeed'; [*wend*]*ámæn*, 'to fish with hook and line'; *-tánk*, suffix of personal agency, 'he who does.' This would make the name mean, 'here, indeed, one fishes with hook and line.'

The place where, below the first of the two falls, they made that night camp was called by the Indians, *Woapagüchüng*. When written, *Woapak-giéchg-ünk*, the following etymology appears acceptable: *woapak*, 'a sycamore'; *giéchg*[*i*], 'nearby'; *-ünk*, locative suffix, 'place where.' Meaning: 'place near the sycamore(s).' From various indications in the diary it can be inferred that both this cataract and the camping place 'near the sycamore(s)' were close to the site of present-day Exeter, near Pittston, Lucerne County; see *U. S. Geol. Surv. Map*, Pennsylvania, Pittston Quadrangle. One of these indications is Roth's remark that, during

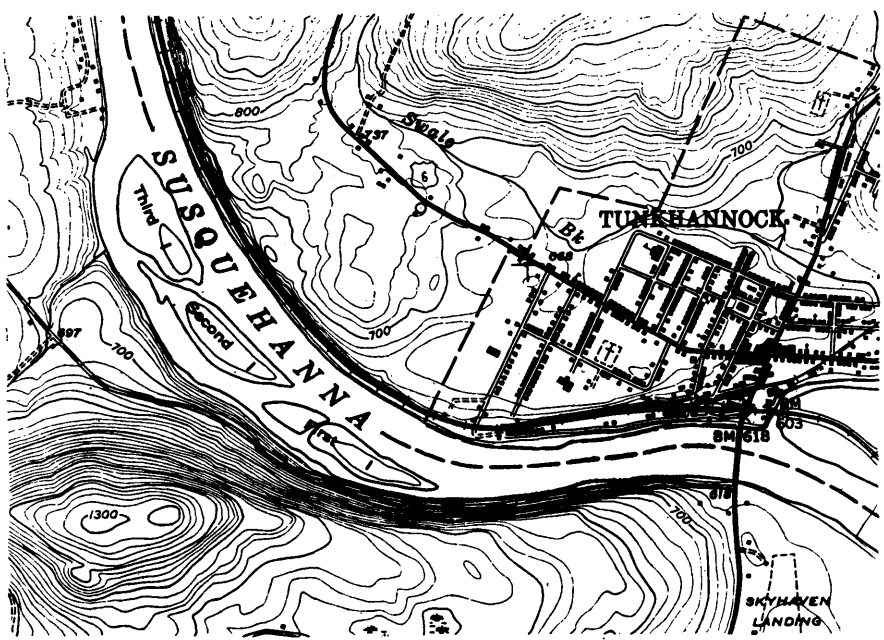


FIGURE 2. Map section showing the "Big Red Cliff" proclivity on the south bank. and the three islands nearby.

the night, drunken visitors from "the Fort nearby" (most likely, Fort Wintermute) came into the camp, making a nuisance of themselves. Fort Wintermute had been built on a site covered today by the town of Exeter (Pennsylvania Guide, 1940, page 476).

*Wiquetschuwik* was the Lenape name, listed by Roth, for his camp site of June 15th; and, in parentheses, he adds the translation, "that is, the end of the big mountains" ("das ist der grossen Berge Ende"). Analytically, the name may be written, *Wique-chtschuwik*: *wique-*, 'end of'; [*wa*]*chtschuw*[*ak*] (plural of *wachtschu*, 'a hill, mountain') 'the mountains'; *-ik*, locative suffix, 'place where.' Hence, the name means, 'place where the mountains end.' By adding, in his translation, the epithet 'big,' Roth evidently wished to be more explicit about the physiography of this camp site, which, on the basis of the day's mileage, can be identified as the spot near Catawissa (Catawissa Twp., Columbia Co.) where, on the left river bank, the Catawissa Mountains, running east-west, abut against

the bend of the Susquehanna (*U. S. Geol. Surv. Map*, Pennsylvania, Catawissa Quadrangle (fig. 3).

As the Lenape name of his camp site, on June 16th, Roth gives *Temamip-apuchko*. Analytical spelling, *Tem-òme-p-ápuchko*, reveals the following components: *tem[iki]-*, 'single'; *ome-p*, 'came forth' (from *ome-n*, 'to come forth'); *-apuchk[o]*, 'a rock, cliff.' Hence, the name means, 'rock (cliff) having come forth singly.' This description fits the topography at Danville (Mahoning Twp., Montour Co.) where across the Susquehanna, near Riverside (Rush Twp., Northumberland Co.) the powerful profile of lone Blue Hill dominates the view from the

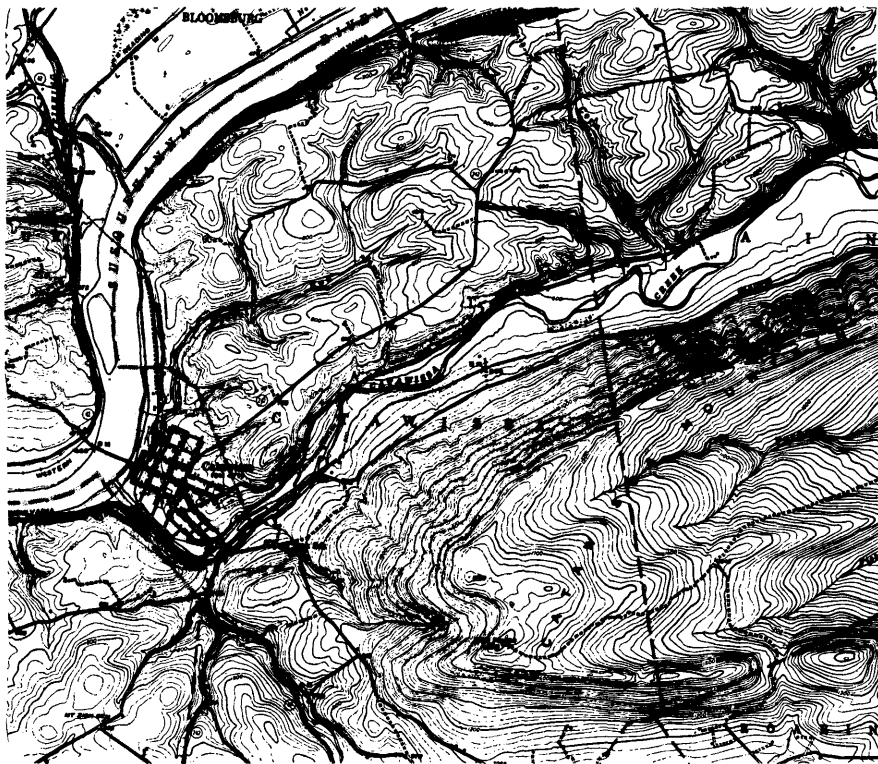


FIGURE 3. Map section showing the 'end of the big mountains' at the bend of the North Branch near Catawissa.

river (fig. 4). This place, being the only one, downstream from Catawissa, fitting the name, may, therefore, be safely regarded as the camp site of June 16th (Singmaster, 1950, page 49, illustr.; *U. S. Geol. Surv. Map*, Pennsylvania Shamokin Quadrangle).

The camp site of June 19th was a place called *Ehendalarwunsink*. I propose to write *Eh-end-alláurwun-s-ünk*: *eh-*, emphatic prefix, 'indeed'; *enda-*, 'where'; *alláurwun*, 'to hunt'; euphonic *-s-*; *-ünk*, locative suffix, 'place where.' Hence the name would mean, 'here, indeed, is a place where to hunt.' This location cannot be precisely identified; it is likely, however, that it was near the site of present-day Lewisburg (Union Co.). The "many white people" who came visiting the travelers point to the rich and early-settled farming district in which the town of Lewisburg

was laid out as early as 1785; while names such as Buffalo Creek, entering at Lewisburg, and White Deer, eight miles north, suggest good hunting. So does indirectly the fact that, near here, the well-known Oneida chief, Shikellemy, had his residence, still remembered as 'Site of Shikellemy's Old Town' (Pennsylvania Guide, 1940, page 544). See *U. S. Geol. Surv. Map*, Penna., Milton Quadrangle.

On June 25th, Roth mentions a night camp at *quename mennähenna*. This name requires no rewriting since, in Roth's spelling, its etymology is quite clear: *quen-*, 'long'; *am[e]-*, 'indeed'; *mendächhen[a]*, 'island.' Meaning: 'very long island.' As evident from that day's mileage given by Roth, this can only have been Long Island, near Jersey Shore, 21½ miles below the mouth of Pine Creek

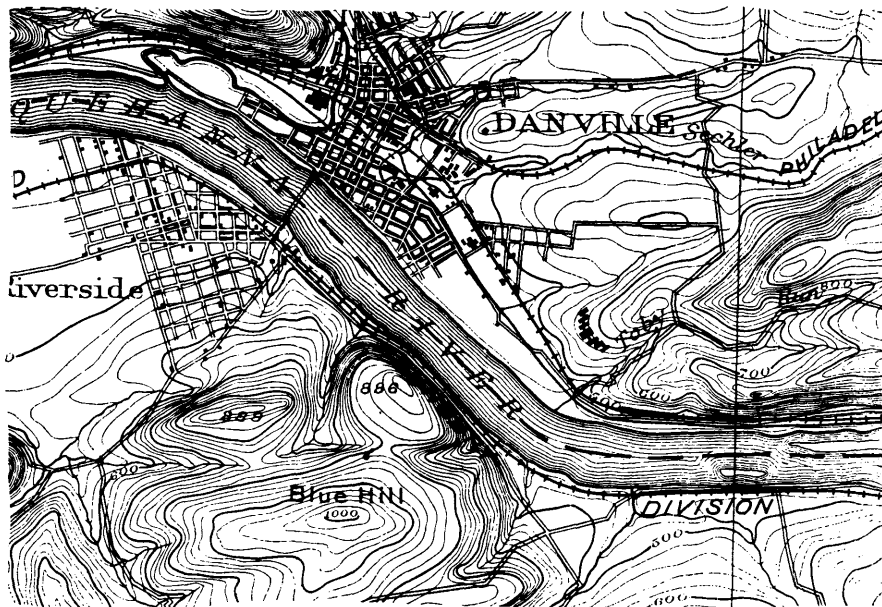


FIGURE 4. Map showing the 'cliff that comes forth singly': lone Blue Hill, at Riverside, across the Susquehanna from Danville.

(fig. 5). See *U. S. Geol. Surv. Map*, Penna., Williamsport, Quadrangle. The English name, 'Long Island,' is clearly a translation of the Lenape name.

The names now following apply to localities encountered by Roth on his overland travel which he began at Great Island, near Lock Haven, jointly with Ettwein and his party. Ettwein, however, with one exception, gives no Indian names in his official travel report, while his descriptions sometimes helped to identify Roth's Indian-named localities. This is true for the next name to be discussed.

Roth calls it *Lahallâwascutewi Sipüŋg*. To make its components discernible, it must be presented in the analytical writing, *La"ha-l lâw-asgote"-wi-sip°-üŋk*: *lauha-*, 'middle of'; *l'läw-asgote*, 'a wide plain' (literally, 'it is in the middle [l'eläwi, 'halfway, in the middle']'); *-wi-*, copulative suffix; *sip[o]-*, 'river'; *-üŋk*, locative suffix. Meaning: 'where the river runs in the middle of a wide plain.' This name fits the description of the place such as given by Ettwein (Jordan, 1901, page 214): "July 14. Reached Clearfield Creek, where the buffaloes formerly cleared large tracts of undergrowth, so as to give them the appearance of cleared fields; hence the Indians called the creek Clearfield. . . ." Obviously, the

English name, 'Clearfield,' for both the creek and the settlement, is a translation of the Indian name given above (fig. 6). That is all the more plausible in view of the meaning of *l'lawasgoten*, 'a wide plain,' which, in *-asgot-*, contains the connotation of *asgask*, *askiwi* [*asgiwi*], meaning both 'raw' and 'green' (also note *askiquall*, a plural, meaning 'grass, herbs'). In brief, to the Lenape it meant 'an area cleared of undergrowth and, subsequently, while still in the raw, covered with green grass and herbs.' See *U. S. Geol. Surv. Map*, Penna., Clearfield Quadrangle.

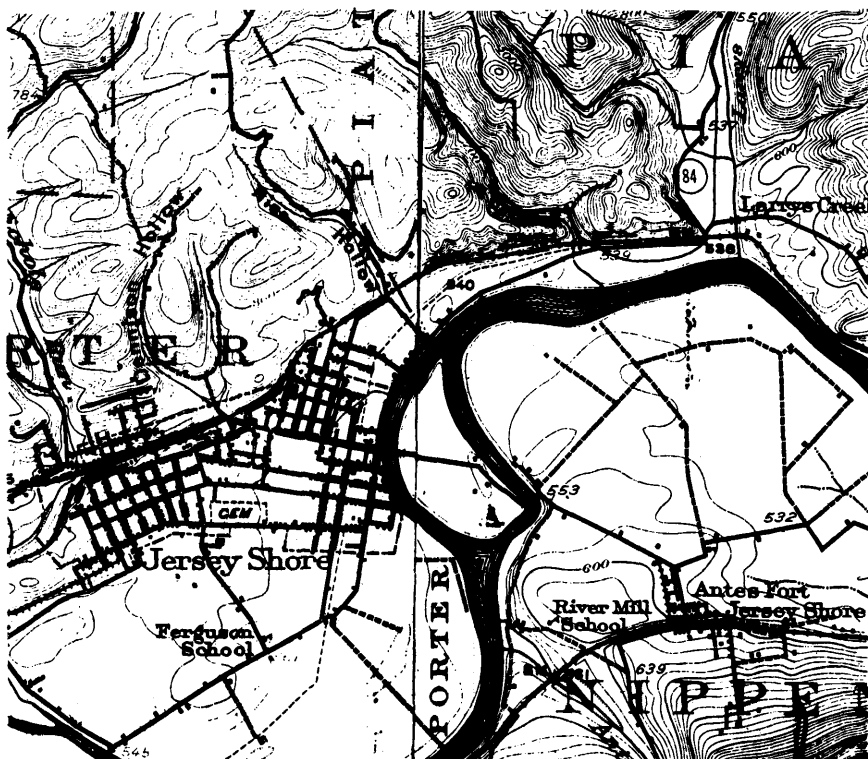


FIGURE 5. Map section showing Long Island in the West Branch of the Susquehanna at Jersey Shore.

At a later date, Roth mentions a night camp in a region which the Indians called *Wachtschunglelawi awossijaje*. These are really three words, *Wächtschünk lelāwi awössijaje*: *wächtsch[u]*, 'a hill, mountain'; *-ünk*, locative suffix, 'place where'; *lelāwi*, 'halfway, in the middle'; *awossijaje*, 'over, over there, beyond, on the other side, behind.' This makes the three words signify, 'place where there is a mountain halfway on the other side'; or, rather, 'where there is a mountain halfway between the one side and the other,' that is, 'a divide' between two river systems; in this case, between the Susquehanna and the Ohio. This divide extends over Brady and Bell Twps., Clearfield County. From the combined reports of Roth and Ettwein it is evident that, in this mountain region, at "a spring, the first waters of the Ohio [Allegheny]," Roth had caught up with Ettwein, on July 19th. According to Ettwein's rather detailed information on the route of his advance,

on July 18th and 19th (Jordan, 1901, page 215), the most likely point on the divide, for the night camp of July 19th, appears to be near the source of the north branch of Mahoning Creek, in Brady Township, Clearfield County, close to present-day Salem. See *U. S. Geol. Surv. Map*, Pennsylvania, DuBois and Penfield Quadrangles (fig. 7).

Finally, there is a locality mentioned for which, quite exceptionally, Ettwein is the one who gives an Indian name (Jordan, 1901, page 217) that fits a situation

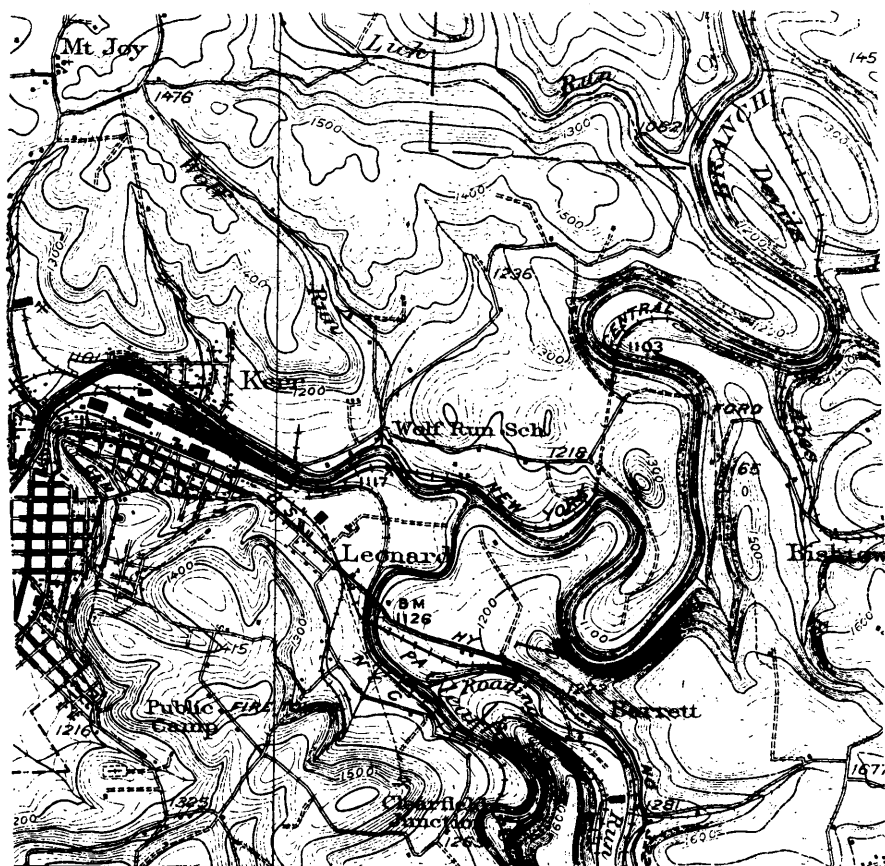


FIGURE 6. Map section showing the 'place where the stream runs in the middle of a wide plain': the area east and west of Clearfield Creek near its confluence with the West Branch of the Susquehanna. The settlement on the left is the eastern half of present-day Clearfield.

very well described in Roth's diary. On July 28th, Roth complains about "an incredible number of trees across the path . . . broken down by the storm . . . and always on our course." Ettwein, under date of July 27th, mentions as their destination a locality which he calls *Tschachkat*. So far, *Tschachkat* neither could be identified nor has the name been explained. With Roth's description of the storm damage in mind, however, a plausible explanation offers itself: *tschachkat* (or *tschachgat*) appears to be connected with *tschachg[achlin]*, 'stump' (also note, *tschachg[ihilleu]*, '[it is] torn off; broken'), thus giving *tschachgat* the meaning of

'something broken down; a windbreak.' According to Roth's travelogue, this windbreak must have been located south of Mahoning Creek, east of its confluence with Little Mahoning Creek, its tributary from the southeast, in Indiana County.

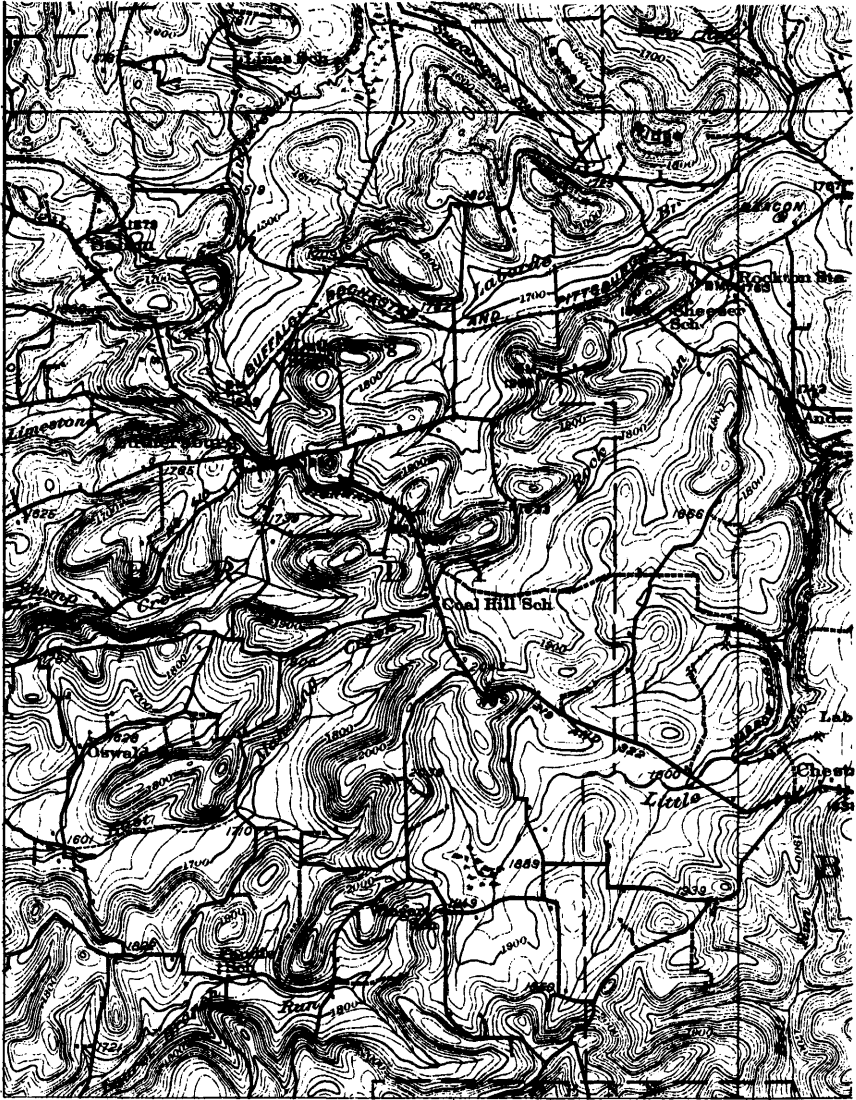


FIGURE 7. Map section showing part of the divide between the Susquehanna and Allegheny Rivers; especially note the stretch of the U. S. Highway [322] between Salem and Coal Hill School, which clearly runs on the ridge.

That storm damage, by the way, must have occurred some time in the past, for the Indians already had that name for the locality when Ettwein, on July 27th, designated it as his destination.



## SUMMARY

A brief summary of the method followed in this study may be appropriate. As a *first* step, the etymology of each place name had to be established. In most cases, this was no simple matter because the names had been written down by Roth as he had heard the Indians pronouncing them, and with no attempt at separating the etymological components. As a *second* step, each meaning, tentatively accepted, was tested as to its accordance with the topographical features which it was supposed to describe, in the map area where it belonged. This map area, in each case, was determined by measuring off, with a Hamilton Map Measurer (Model No. 33), on the respective Quadrangles of the *U. S. Geological Survey Map*, Pennsylvania, the distances in miles from one camp site to the next, such as daily recorded in the diary. As a *third* and final step, conclusive confirmation of results so far obtained was sought, and occasionally derived, from pictures or descriptive passages in books.

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